

## United States Postal Service

## § 273.2

or organization. Managers are to provide guidance in this regard to all employees who must handle such information.

(b) *No employee will maintain a secret system of records about individuals.* All records systems containing personally identifiable information about individuals must be reported to the Manager, Records Office.

(c) All employees shall adhere strictly to the procedures established by the U.S. Postal Service to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of information about individuals that is collected, maintained and used for official Postal Service business. Employees shall be held responsible for any violation of these procedures.

[45 FR 44273, July 1, 1980, as amended at 60 FR 57346, Nov. 15, 1995; 68 FR 56560, Oct. 1, 2003]

### § 268.2 Consequences of non-compliance.

(a) The Privacy Act authorizes any individual, whether or not an employee, to bring a civil action in U.S. District Court to obtain judicial review of the failure of the Postal Service to comply with the requirements of the Act or its implementing regulations. In certain instances of willful or intentional non-compliance, the plaintiff may recover damages from the Postal Service in the minimum amount of \$1,000 together with costs of the action and attorney fees.

(b) The Act provides criminal sanctions for individuals, including employees, who violate certain of its provisions.

(1) Any officer or employee who, by virtue of his employment or position, has possession of, or access to, official records which contain individually identifiable information and who, knowing that disclosure of the specific material is prohibited by Postal Service regulations, willfully discloses the material to a person or agency not entitled to receive it, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000.

(2) Any officer or employee who willfully maintains a system of records without meeting the notice requirements set forth in Postal Service regulations shall be guilty of a mis-

demeanor and fined not more than \$5,000.

(3) Any person who knowingly and willfully requests or obtains any record concerning another individual from the Postal Service under false pretense shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000.

(c) In addition to the criminal sanctions, any employee violating any provisions of these rules of conduct is subject to disciplinary action which may result in dismissal from the Postal Service.

[40 FR 45726, Oct. 2, 1975]

## PART 273—ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM FRAUD CIVIL REMEDIES ACT

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AUTHORITY: 31 U.S.C. Chapter 38; 39 U.S.C. 401.

SOURCE: 52 FR 12901, Apr. 20, 1987, unless otherwise noted.

### § 273.1 Purpose.

This part establishes procedures for imposing civil penalties and assessments under the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986 (codified at 31 U.S.C. 3801-3812) against any person who makes, submits, or presents, or causes to be made, submitted, or presented, a false fictitious, or fraudulent claim or written statement to the Postal Service. Procedures governing the hearing and appeal rights of any person alleged to be liable for such penalties and assessments are set forth in part 962 of this title.

### § 273.2 Definitions.

(a) *Claim* means any request, demand, or submission:

(1) Made to the Postal Service for property, services, or money (including

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money representing grants, loans, insurance, or benefits); or

(2) Made to a recipient of property, services, or money from the Postal Service or to a party to a contract with the Postal Service:

(i) For property or services if the United States:

(A) Provided such property or services;

(B) Provided any portion of the funds for the purchase of such property or services; or

(C) Will reimburse such recipient or party for the purchase of such property or services; or

(ii) For the payment of money (including money representing grants, loans, insurance or benefits) if the United States:

(A) Provided any portion of the money requested or demanded; or

(B) Will reimburse such recipient or party for any portion of the money paid on such request or demand; or

(3) Made to the Postal Service which has the effect of decreasing an obligation to pay or account for property, services, or money.

(b) *Complaint* refers to the administrative Complaint served by the Reviewing Official on a Respondent pursuant to § 273.8.

(c) Investigating Official refers to the Inspector General of the Postal Service or any designee within the United States Office of the Inspector General who serves in a position for which the rate of basic pay is not less than the minimum rate of basic pay for grade GS-16 under the General Schedule.

(d) *Judicial Officer* refers to the Judicial Officer or Acting Judicial Officer of the United States Postal Service or for purposes other than specified in § 962.21 of this title any designee within the Judicial Officer Department.

(e) *Knows or has reason to know*, for purposes of establishing liability under 31 U.S.C. 3802, means that, with respect to a claim or statement, although no proof of specific intent to defraud is required, a person:

(1) Has actual knowledge that the claim or statement is false, fictitious, or fraudulent;

(2) Acts in deliberate ignorance of the truth or falsity of the claim or statement; or

(3) Acts in reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the claim or statement.

(f) *Person* refers to any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or private organization.

(g) *Postmaster General* refers to the Postmaster General of the United States or his designee.

(h) *Presiding Officer* refers to an Administrative Law Judge designated by the Judicial Officer to conduct a hearing authorized by 31 U.S.C. 3803 in accordance with Part 962 of this title.

(i) *Respondent* refers to any person alleged to be liable for civil penalty or assessment under 31 U.S.C. 3802.

(j) *Reviewing Official* refers to the General Counsel of the Postal Service or any designee within the Law Department who serves in a position for which the rate of basic pay is not less than the minimum rate of basic pay for grade GS-16 under the General Schedule.

(k) *Statement* means any representation, certification, affirmation, document, record, or accounting or book-keeping entry made:

(1) With respect to a claim or to obtain the approval or payment of a claim (including relating to eligibility to make a claim); or

(2) With respect to (including relating to eligibility for)—

(i) A contract with, or a bid or proposal for a contract with; or

(ii) A grant, loan, or benefit from, the Postal Service, or any State, political subdivision of a State, or other party, if the United States Government provides any portion of the money or property under such contract or for such grant, loan, or benefit, or if the Government will reimburse such State, political subdivision, or party for any portion of the money or property under such contract or for such grant, loan or benefit.

[52 FR 12901, Apr. 20, 1987, as amended at 56 FR 55825, Oct. 30, 1991; 67 FR 16024, Apr. 4, 2002]

#### § 273.3 Liability for false claims and statements.

Section 3802 of title 31, United States Code, provides for liability as follows:

(a) *Claims*. (1) Any person who makes, presents, or submits, or causes to be